

Colby Library Quarterly



February 1956

THE COLBY LIBRARY QUARTERLY is published by the Colby College Library at Waterville, Maine, under the editorship of Carl J. Weber, Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts. Subscription price: two dollars a year. Current single numbers: fifty cents. A printed INDEX to Series One, Two, or Three will be supplied free upon request to any subscriber to this QUARTERLY, as long as the supply lasts. We are no longer able to provide copies of *all* previous issues, but will be glad to meet requests for special numbers as long as we have copies of them.

Series One was published in the four-year period 1943 to 1946 in January, March, June, and October, but with the year 1947 the COLBY LIBRARY QUARTERLY began publication in February, May, August, and November. Series II was begun in 1947, Series III in 1951, and Series IV in 1955.

Communications regarding subscriptions should be addressed to the Librarian; communications regarding articles in the QUARTERLY should be addressed to Carl J. Weber. Unsolicited manuscripts should be accompanied by postage stamps and addressed envelopes. In general, this QUARTERLY is interested in Maine authors (for example, in Sarah Orne Jewett and Edwin Arlington Robinson) and in Maine history, and in those books and authors from outside of Maine (Henry James and Thomas Hardy, for example) who are well represented by special collections in the Colby College Library or who have exerted an influence on Maine life or letters.

Colby Library Quarterly

Series IV

February 1956

No. 5

JEWETT, TARKINGTON, AND THE MAINE LINE

By RICHARD CARY

IN the long history of human warfare, one of the least fatal but most acidulous conflicts has been that between country-folk and city-folk; in particular, that between permanent country-dwellers and transient city-vacationers. The enmity roused by this stressful juncture of opposing cultures has been a source of special concern for Maine, self-styled the nation's Vacationland. The recent publication of *Booth Tarkington* by James Woodress prompts another scrutiny of this endless, dissonant problem.

In the Spring of 1893 Maine's most eloquent spokesman, Miss Sarah Orne Jewett (1849-1909), noted with some trepidation the growing hordes of seasonal visitors and the resultant clash of simplicity and sophistication. In a letter to F. M. Hopkins, one of her editors, she said: "You know there is a saying of Plato's that the best thing one can do for the people of a State is to make them acquainted with each other, and it was some instinctive feeling of this sort which led me to wish that the town and country people were less suspicious of one another."

In her Preface to the second edition of *Deephaven* (October 1893) she paraphrased freely the contents of this letter but expanded her remarks to include a general review of the conditions of rustic life around her. She deplored the "fast-growing New England cities" which twenty years ago had begun "to be overcrowded and uncomfortable," thereby motivating "a reflex current that set countryward in summer." She was "possessed by a dark fear that townspeople and country people would never understand one an-

other," and strove by the might of her pen to correct the misimpression of urban ladies that selectmen of her Maine hamlets were tramps, and, in turn, that "these same timid ladies" were either proud or patronizing. She tried, almost forlornly, to explain that her stalwart farmers and fishers were not rubberstamps of "the caricatured Yankee of fiction, striped trousers, bell-crowned hat, and all." In her desire to preserve the individualism of the natives and the traditions of her region, Miss Jewett inveighed against the plentiful cash "that the tourist or summer citizen left behind him." There lay corruption. "The quaint houses, the roadside thicket, the shady woodland" were swept away; residents "hastened to spoil instead of to mend the best things that their village held." Welcome though they were, "the well-filled purses" of casual travellers symbolized the barbarian at the gates, flagrant, irrepressible. A note of unconscious bitterness crept into Miss Jewett's pleas, despite her wish to effect reciprocal understanding. Resentfully, she watched as "the irresistible current" swirled over and carried away "all the individuality and quaint personal characteristics of rural New England." She hoped bravely that one day "our injury of what we inherited" would be redressed, and visualized a time when the "aggressions and ignorances of city and country cousins" would give way habitually to "compliments between the summer boarder and his rustic host."

The sheer optimism of Miss Jewett's view has been demonstrated too unfortunately often over the years to be elaborated upon here. Last November's squabble over Bernard DeVoto's criticism of Maine landscape is a case in point which just missed turning into a *cause célèbre*. On the other side of this prepossessingly drear picture, however, is to be found an occasional bright instance when aborigine and outlander have achieved the harmony Miss Jewett so dauntlessly predicted. One of the more prominent exceptions was Booth Tarkington (1869-1946), native of Indiana, who adopted the state of Maine as his alternate home.

Tarkington's first acquaintance with New England terrain and character came in 1887 when he enrolled at Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, New Hampshire—coincidentally, the hometown of Miss Jewett's maternal ancestors. Absence of dormitories necessitated Tarkington's living in the village. "The shock of new people, new places, new ideas . . . jolted him beneficially," says Wooddress, and adds, "his adjustment to the new life was rapid."

Tarkington's first vacation in Maine seems to have occurred at Bar Harbor during the summer of 1893 while on holiday with his mother and sister. Evidently impressed by the resort scene, Tarkington used it as background for a full-length farce comedy, *The Ruse*, which was produced that Christmas by the Indianapolis Dramatic Club but never published. Another increment of this visit appears in an early draft of Tarkington's first novel, *The Gentleman from Indiana*. The opening chapters took place in Bar Harbor, and it was not until five years later, when he resumed the unfinished novel, that the action was transferred to its appropriate locale, Indiana.

1903, however, is to be counted the most significant year in Tarkington's relation to Maine. Convalescing from a harsh attack of typhoid fever, he was advised by his doctor to spend the summer in "the healthiest place in the United States . . . Kennebunkport, Maine." The climate, the food, the primeval quiet intrigued Tarkington to the extent that he became a regular visitor thereafter. In 1916 he purchased land on a hill above town; in 1917 built an impressive colonial frame house which he called *Seawood*. Every year he returned lovingly to this country of beaches and mountains, pine woods and splendid sunsets. During the Summer and Fall he was to be seen relaxing on the sand at Kennebunkport, puttering in his boathouse or on his ancient coasting schooner *Regina*, or, poised above a drawing-board in his study, filling large sheets of yellow paper with indistinguishable signs.

Of Tarkington's five published works with Maine set-

tings, all but one are in light or comic vein. *The Wren* (1922), a three-act comedy laid in a summer boarding-house, presents country-city dissension in the form of a struggle between the daughter of a sea captain and a pretty summer visitor for the love of a young artist. Significantly, the Maine girl wins. Upon Tarkington's invitation Helen Hayes, who starred in the Broadway production with Leslie Howard, spent a week in Kennebunkport, soaking in the tang of the seacoast town and the twang of its inhabitants. The play survived for only twenty-four performances.

Tweedles (1924), a comedy of manners based on urban-rural controversy, took some four years to arrive on Broadway because of the reluctance of Tarkington's manager to attempt another play with Maine background. Tarkington sets in opposition two equally proud and venerable families, one from Pennsylvania, one from Maine. Neither the snobbish Main Line Philadelphians nor the humble Maine Line pioneers can accept the thought of union through the marriage of their children. The result is a stalemate of crackling opprobrium, which the youngsters of course circumvent.

Mary's Neck (1932), written originally as a series of stories in several periodicals during 1929-1930, is focused upon Kennebunkport and the antics of a midwestern family vacationing in Maine for the first time. There is constant prestidigitation on both sides, but the "foreigners" are usually outwitted by the canny natives.

The last of Tarkington's genially satiric treatments of the resident-visitor theme is "High Summer," published as a serial in the *American Magazine* (July-October 1931) but never issued in volume form. As before, his sympathy is not difficult to locate; the outcome generally favors the hardrock natives.

In all his other works Tarkington handled the mutual-animosity motif playfully, but in *Mirthful Haven* (1930) he turned on it with such craggy seriousness that Robert E. Sherwood exclaimed: "Thoroughly and violently unneigh-

borly." The thesis of this novel rose out of an actual altercation in Tarkington's Kennebunkport experience. For some grievance, real or fancied, Captain Blynn Montgomery, an elderly employee of the River Club, was suddenly and unconditionally discharged by a dominant faction of non-resident members. Tarkington tried to bring about a reversal of this action but was defeated by a determined cabal. He resigned furiously and would have nothing to do with the summer colony thereafter. He bought a house by the river, set it up as a rival club, and hired the captain for life as caretaker. In a burst of outrage at the contemptibility of his associates, he dramatized the incident and established it at the core of his book. With the chips down, Tarkington showed his hand: it was Maine natives, aces high.

By 1930 Tarkington had spent better than a quarter-century, off and on, within the borders of Maine. He wandered about in a state of lively appreciation, captivated by its multiple charms: the distinct flavor of its vernacular, the depth and excellence of its customs, the singularity and probity of its habitants. (In latter days, Tarkington admitted that he liked Maine better than Indiana.) He was swift to grasp the implications of the social structure in the summer resort and the discrepant relations between dwellers and transients. With the insight of an artist and the compassion of a humanitarian he sensed the underlying ire of the Maine native in his role of servitor to summer colonists. He studied his unpretentious Kennebunkport neighbors acutely, passing as much of his time among them as he could afford. Gradually he wore down the barriers of mistrust and indignation. Gradually he lost the hue of alienism and came to be accepted as one of the community, respected for his own sake, lauded as a man among men.

What lay behind this cohesion? What made it possible for Tarkington to be incorporated so completely by the villagers? First, perhaps, is his New England backdrop. Although Indiana-born of Indiana parents, Tarkington

could point to roots in his mother's ancestry which reached back to Thomas Hooker, belligerent founder of Connecticut. Add to this heritage Tarkington's nimble ability to absorb influences: of his early Exeter sojourn he had written: "[It] began to open my eyes to the world."

Secondly, Tarkington exuded simplicity, the common touch; there was no patrician rigmarole in his nature. Francis Mulberry Chick, his chauffeur from 1913 on, said it for all his friends: "We folks around here like the Tarkingtons. They're so common." These words, in effect, echoed one of Tarkington's own characters in "High Summer": "Why I like Joe Nutter, it's because he's cawmun." And as a fillip in this respect, Tarkington modestly declined honorary degrees from Colby and Bowdoin colleges (among others), protesting, "What use is a collection of hoods?"

Thirdly, Tarkington had the capacity of evoking loyalty. Kenneth Roberts, a Maine neighbor, offered him a place on the title page and a cut of the royalties from *Northwest Passage* for his magnanimous aid. Tarkington refused, of course. His aforementioned chauffeur, the gargantuan Mr. Chick, and an Indianapolis cab driver, Peg Hamilton, both named their sons Booth out of grateful esteem.

Last, in a list which might well be much longer, is courage—Tarkington's ineradicable gayety in the face of tragedy. In the last two decades of his life Tarkington's eyesight was so dim that he had to depend upon friends to guide him when out-of-doors. After some months of total blindness and two unsuccessful operations for cataracts, Tarkington was still able to joke about his condition. To the normally stoic natives this was surpassingly admirable. "Gosh! If I had to go through what that feller's been through, you wouldn't hear me laughing about it any!" The ultimate tribute of one brand of courage to another.

These were the elements—and humility, courtesy, fellowship—which breached the massed antipathy between

provincial and metropolitan, the elements which Miss Jewett foresaw would "bind together men who had once lived far apart." However, the epithet which best epitomizes this vision is Kenneth Roberts'. He called Tarkington "A Gentleman from Maine and Indiana." That's what Tarkington was *wherever* he went. Essentially, that's what Miss Jewett meant. And, everything considered, that's what made the difference.*



"TORRENT" NO. 27 LOCATED

At the time of compiling our Jubilee Census of Edwin Arlington Robinson's *The Torrent and The Night Before* (see our issue for February 1947, page 9), we were able to list as Copy No. 27 one which Robinson had given to John W. Marr in January 1897; but we were forced to add: "This copy . . . is now in the hands of an owner whom we have been unable to trace." Well, after the passage of nearly ten years, the long-lost copy has turned up. It is now in Philadelphia, in the Library of the University of Pennsylvania. We are indebted to Mrs. Neda M. Westlake, the Assistant Curator of the university's Rare Book Collection, for this information.



ON EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

By CONRAD AIKEN

It is refreshing to see at least a modicum of justice done to the American poet EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON, and especially in England, where, during his lifetime, he got precious little; but the statement of an English re-

* Acknowledgment is made of use of the following sources: Sarah Orne Jewett, *Deephaven* (Boston, 1893); James Woodress, *Booth Tarkington* (Philadelphia, 1955); Dorothy R. Russo and Thelma L. Sullivan, *A Bibliography of Booth Tarkington* (Indianapolis, 1949); Carl J. Weber, *Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett* (Waterville, 1947); Kenneth Roberts, "A Gentleman from Maine and Indiana," *Saturday Evening Post* (August 8, 1931).

viewer¹ that Robinson "showed his greatness by rejecting much of the folly of his contemporaries," and that "he was in turn rejected by his contemporaries because of his dependence on the past," is, I am afraid, not borne out by the facts. Robinson was already being whispered about, and Miniver Cheevy being quoted, when Eliot and myself were undergraduates at Harvard, and as if he might be the first breath of a possible renaissance.

When, a few years later, Frost, Masters, Pound, and the Imagists, all made their appearance, he was not only not in the least rejected but accepted as very much one of them. It is no accident that Amy Lowell, writing, in 1917, her *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry*, makes him one of her six heroes, even if she seriously misunderstood and underestimated him, as was inevitable.

Three years later, we find Louis Untermeyer writing of him (in *The New Era in American Poetry*): "No living writer has achieved a more personal and a more indigenous idiom; his ironic studies of character are as sharp as Masters', his background as faithfully native as Frost's. . . . When most of the preceding generation were poeticizing in ornate and artificial numbers, he was the first to express himself in that hard and clear utterance which became part of our present technique, and, later on, was adopted as one of the chief articles in the creed of the Imagists."

But these are only two examples out of many which make it abundantly clear that Robinson was not only very much a part of the poetic "revolution" of that period but widely regarded as one of its leaders. It was no accident, either, that he three times received the Pulitzer Prize—in 1922 [for *Collected Poems*], in 1924 [for *The Man Who Died Twice*], and in 1928 [for *Tristram*]. Does this sound very much like "rejection"?

As for his own rejection of the "follies" of the rest of us,

¹ writing in the London *Times Literary Supplement*. The present comment on Robinson was written to correct that reviewer; it originally appeared among "Letters to the Editor" in the *Times Literary Supplement* for October 14, 1955 (page 605), and is here reprinted by special permission of Mr. Aiken.—Editor.

I can speak from experience when I say that he was kindness, sympathy, and patience itself.²



A CENTENNIAL REMINDER OF MACAULAY

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY's *History of England* was planned on so elaborate a scale as to require twelve years for the publication of the five volumes in which the work first appeared. Volumes I and II were published in 1849, Volumes III and IV in 1855; Macaulay himself died in 1859, and Volume V, "edited by his sister, Lady Trevelyan," was not published until 1861.

When the last volume which Macaulay himself saw through the press appeared (i.e., Vol. IV in 1855), it contained an account of an episode that took place in 1695 at Royston—near Barnsley in the West Riding of Yorkshire. An infantry regiment quartered there levied "contributions" on the people of that town. Macaulay describes how "a petition was sent up to the Commons . . . and . . . a representation . . . [by] the Commons [was subsequently] laid before William [the Third with the result that he] promised ample redress . . . and established a military board for . . . detecting and punishing such malpractices as had taken place at Royston."

After the publication of this volume of Macaulay's work, he received from an unknown reader of the book an inquiry regarding Royston as a publication center; could the author tell him anything about that? Macaulay replied as follows:

Albany London

November 23, 1855

Sir,

I am in possession of no particular information about Royston. It is very probable that there may have been a press there in the days of

² In 1919 Robinson acquired a copy of Conrad Aiken's *Scepticisms: Notes on Contemporary Poetry* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1919), in which Mr. Aiken's comments on Amy Lowell and Louis Untermeyer are elaborated. This book stands at the head of James Humphry's alphabetically-arranged check-list of Robinson's library (see page 17 in *The Library of Edwin Arlington Robinson*, compiled by James Humphry, III: Waterville, Colby College Press, 1950). The book is now in the Robinson Room of the Colby College Library.—Editor.

the Commonwealth. At that time no Episcopalian divine would have been able to get his writings printed at the University of Cambridge. It was therefore very natural that some friends of the oppressed Church should establish in the neighbourhood of the University a press to which such a man as Jeremy Taylor might have recourse. But I should be much surprised to find that, after the Restoration, a press at Royston had been licensed; and I observe that all the works, which, as you inform me, bear the date of Royston, were printed before the passing of the Licensing Act.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient Servant

T B MACAULAY

The original autograph of this letter has recently come to light in a copy of Macaulay's *History* once owned by Henry William Vincent (and later owned by Leo Terry), but it is impossible to say whether Vincent was the "Sir" whom Macaulay addressed.

In any case, the five volumes of the *History* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1849, 1855, 1861) in their original blind-stamped plum-brown cloth, each volume enclosed in a half-leather light-brown protective case, were recently purchased by Mr. and Mrs. H. Ridgely Bullock, Jr., of New York City, and by them presented to the Colby College Library—their purchase being made just one hundred years, almost to the day, after Macaulay had written his letter about Royston.



SOME OTHER RECENT ACQUISITIONS

THE COLBY LIBRARY ASSOCIATES have given the Library a copy of the seventh edition of Timothy Dwight's *Theology, Explained and Defended* (New York, G. & C. & H. Carvill, 1830), and in this case we are happier to have the seventh edition than we might have been with the first, for this copy is *Ex Libris* Elijah Parish Lovejoy (Colby 1826). Timothy Dwight (1752-1817) was one of the popular American theologians of Lovejoy's day.

To Mrs. Hazel G. Littlefield Smith, of Palos Verdes Estates, California, we are indebted for the original manuscript of "In the Mojave" by Lord Dunsany. This story was written in 1953, while Dunsany was visiting in this country; it was published in *Harper's Bazaar* in the fall of the same year. Mrs. Smith has also given the Library two quill pens used by Lord Dunsany—one a goose quill, the other a swan's quill from a swan shot by Dunsany near his castle in County Meath, Ireland.

From Mr. Arthur G. Robinson, Colby, 'o6, a number of interesting books have come to the Library. Two sets of Sir Walter Scott's Waverley Novels—one in 25 volumes, beautifully bound, and another in 48 volumes of a smaller format—head the list of numerous individual titles of Scott's, including the *Journals*, *Quentin Durward*, *Miscellanies*, *Marmion*, and *The Doom of Devorgoil*. American authors are represented by Howells, Hawthorne, Lowell, and Longfellow, many with first editions. Other material, too numerous to mention in the limited space here available, ranges from interesting and valuable numbers of the *International Studio* to an account of Moses Greenleaf, Maine's first map-maker. Many times previously Mr. Robinson, a loyal supporter of his college's library, has enriched our collections, and this most recent of his contributions is a particularly generous one.

From Mr. Frederic E. Camp, of Miami Beach, Florida, we have received a beautifully designed book published under the sponsorship of the Friends of the Princeton Library. Designed by P. J. Conkwright, this is a 1955 publication of Elias Boudinot's *Journey to Boston in 1809*.

At an auction of literary manuscripts, held in Chicago on November 13, 1955, the manuscript of Edwin Arlington Robinson's poem "Maya" was sold to Mr. Louis H. Silver of Chicago, and was by him presented to the Colby College Library. The auction was held for the purpose of raising funds for the support of *Poetry Magazine*, founded nearly half a century ago by Harriet Monroe. Mr. Silver's gener-

ous action has thus benefited both the Library and the magazine. (The November auction served to send at least one reader back to Harriet Monroe's autobiography, *A Poet's Life* [New York, Macmillan, 1938], and in it he came upon her vivid account of her trip abroad in the summer of 1897. She sailed for Havre on May 15 and later wrote that "two London evenings stand out most vividly in my memory." One was a Sunday evening supper given by Wilfrid and Alice Meynell at their apartment. The other was "a reception given in mid-July by one hundred women to one hundred men. Elizabeth Robins, Ibsen actress and distinguished novelist, got me an invitation." At this reception, Miss Monroe continues,

I met a number of literary celebrities— . . . most memorable of all, Thomas Hardy. Hardy, then about fifty-six, looked and talked like a business-man rather than a poet—a round face, dark hair, average height and figure, and an indifferent manner until I spoke of having seen one of Mrs. Fiske's first performances of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* before I left New York. [See the November 1955 issue of this QUARTERLY, page 84.] It was the first eyewitness report he had heard,* and he asked many detailed questions about her interpretation of his heroine. I told him it had only one inadequacy—the actress was too small and frail-looking for a type physically luxuriant such as I had always conceived Tess to be. He said, "Yes, that is a pity," but he was consoled by my praise of the beauty and power of the final scenes when the gifted actress made one forget physical limitations as she rose to the tragic simplicity and dignity of her role.

Harriet Monroe also wrote about her correspondence with Edwin Arlington Robinson.)

Lack of space compels us to be, for the moment, quite curt about another magnificent gift. From Mr. James A. Healy, of New York City, the Library has just received a collection of the books and letters of JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE (1871-1909). This Irish dramatist and poet, who joined with William Butler Yeats and Lady Gregory in

* Hardy apparently did not tell Miss Monroe that he had already "heard" of Mrs. Fiske's Tess four months previously, when his New York friend, Rebekah Owen, wrote him a detailed account of the opening night's performance on March 2, 1897. Hardy acknowledged Miss Owen's letter on March 16. See Weber's *Hardy and the Lady from Madison Square* (Colby College Press, 1952), pages 118-120.—Editor.

1904 in founding the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, is perhaps best known for his *Riders to the Sea* (1905) and *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907). The Healy Collection will now equip the Colby College Library with Synge material which can stand proudly alongside the splendid Yeats and "A.E." collections which have previously come to us from Mr. Healy.



NAPOLEONIC ECHOES

JUST fifty years ago, Thomas Hardy published Part Two of his epic drama *The Dynasts*. Part One had appeared in 1904, and Part Three was to appear in 1908. In 1927 (the year before Hardy's death) Macmillan & Co. of London issued a *de luxe* edition of *The Dynasts*—525 copies printed on Large Paper, autographed (in Volume I) by Thomas Hardy—with a frontispiece portrait of the author by Francis Dodd.

One set of these three volumes was acquired by one of Hardy's most enthusiastic American admirers, A. Edward Newton of Philadelphia, and into each volume he pasted his well-known Johnsonian Temple Bar bookplate. After Newton's death, his library was sold at auction in New York City, and on the afternoon of Thursday, May 15, 1941, the librarian of Colby College (accompanied by his curator of rare books) was on hand to see some of the Newton books go under the hammer. (Two of them were knocked down to Colby.) *The Dynasts* of 1927 made up Lot No. 260, which was *not* sold to the Colby Library. The books have, however, at last found their way to our shelves, thanks to the interest and generosity of Mr. and Mrs. H. Ridgely Bullock, Jr., of New York City. They recently purchased the Newton books and have added them to the Hardy Collection at Colby.

With the books came an autograph letter of Hardy's, written on paper with a mourning border to the Reverend

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L. E. V. Filleul, of Sandford, Wareham, Dorset. (After Hardy's death in January 1928, Mr. Filleul sold the letter to help raise funds for the Dorset County Hospital.) Through the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Bullock we are therefore able to add still another Hardy letter to the Colby file of such autographs. This one is a particularly informative letter—on a number of points.

THE ATHENAEUM, PALL MALL.
[LONDON,] S.W.
July 18. 1904

Dear Mr Filleul:

I have never before met with the Bonaparte jingle that you enclose with your letter, and I cannot at this moment recollect any local rhymes about him, though there are, of course, infinite numbers—common to all England—containing every variety of sarcasm and invective. Local stories of the scares he caused were not infrequent formerly.

I have been up here [in London] since last April, but it is so hot every day that I hope to get back [to Dorset] by the end of this week, if I can stay at Max Gate for the stench from the sewage works which, at times, they tell me, is very bad, and likely to drive many more people than myself away from Dorchester.

I return the lines as you request, and am

Very truly yours

T. HARDY.

[P.S.:] As we have a house here my wife proposes to stay on a little longer, till I can tell her the state of the atmosphere at Max Gate.

T.H.

Mr. Bullock has recently supplemented the gift of this *de luxe* three-volume edition of *The Dynasts* with a further enrichment of our Hardy Collection. This supplementary gift is on such a princely scale and involves so many books, pamphlets, letters, manuscripts, and other Hardiana, that space is not here available for even a brief description of the lot. That will have to await some future issue of our quarterly.



A WHITTIER AUTOGRAPH

THIS is a good time of year for a re-reading of Whittier's *Snow-Bound*. At least we who live on or near the Colby College campus have no difficulty, at the moment, in perfect visual realization of the scene described by the poet:

No cloud above, no earth below,
A universe of sky and snow!

And most appropriately, therefore, just at this time, there reaches our hands an interesting John Greenleaf Whittier autograph.

Ten years from now, when the year 1966 ushers in the centenary of *Snow-Bound* (originally published when the poet was fifty-nine years old), the Colby College Library will be happy in the possession of this letter, for in it the author refers to certain lines in *Snow-Bound*. The letter was written in 1870 to some unidentified Westerner who had been reading the Quaker poet's lines soon after they were first published, and who had written him in an attempt to remove the veil of anonymity from the portrait of that

woman tropical, intense
In thought and act, in soul and sense

to whom Whittier had devoted eighty lines of his poem.

There is nothing surprising about the fact that a reader had wondered who this woman was. For her portrait had been painted by the poet with clear and effective strokes. What reader has, in fact, *not* wondered about her?

Another guest that winter night
Flashed back from lustrous eyes the light.
Unmarked by time, and yet not young,
The honeyed music of her tongue
And words of meekness scarcely told
A nature passionate and bold,
Strong, self-concentred, spurning guide,
Its milder features dwarfed beside
Her unbent will's majestic pride.
She sat among us, at the best,
A not unfear'd, half-welcome guest,
Rebuking with her cultured phrase
Our homeliness of words and ways.

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No wonder curiosity was aroused, in the mind of more than one reader, as to who this "half-welcome guest" was.

She blended in a like degree
The vixen and the devotee,
Revealing with each freak or feint
The temper of Petruchio's Kate
The raptures of Siena's saint. . . .

In a later line or two, Whittier remarked:

It is not ours to separate
The tangled skein of will and fate.

Our recently acquired letter makes it clear, however, that Whittier had no objection to his correspondent's knowing who the "vixen . . . devotee" was. To the inquirer he replied:

Amesbury

11^{mo} 18. 1870

My dear f[rien]d

The person referred to in "Snow Bound" was Miss Harriet Livermore, daughter of Ed. St Loe Livermore, Judge of the Sup[reme] Court of N[ew] H[ampshire]. She spent the last thirty years of her life mostly in Jerusalem and the East.

I thank thee for thy kind words in regard to my poems, and am very glad that I have a friend in the Far West.

Very truly thy f[rien]d

JOHN G. WHITTIER

This identification of Harriet Livermore is, of course, no news; for in later editions of his poem Whittier added an Introduction in which he spoke about her and her "two white horses with red marks on their backs." Doubtless, other readers besides our Westerner had written to Whittier to let him know that he had aroused their curiosity about the "woman tropical, intense." May we not, however, entertain the pleasant thought that it was this recently-acquired letter of inquiry that first brought home to the poet's mind the desirability of letting other readers in on the secret of the identity of the half-welcome guest?

COLBY LIBRARY ASSOCIATES

THIS ORGANIZATION was founded in April, 1955. Its object is to increase the resources of the Colby College Library by securing gifts and by providing funds for the purchase of books, manuscripts, and other material which the Library could not otherwise acquire.

MEMBERSHIP is open to anyone paying an annual subscription of five dollars or more (undergraduates pay fifty cents, and graduates of the college pay one dollar annually during the first five years out of College), or an equivalent gift of books (or other material) needed by the Library. Such books must be given specifically through the ASSOCIATES. The fiscal year of the ASSOCIATES runs from July 1 to June 30. Members are invited to renew their memberships without special reminder at any date after July 1.

Members will receive copies of the COLBY LIBRARY QUARTERLY and notification of the meetings of the society. Officers for 1955-1956 are:

President, Frederick A. Pottle, Yale University.

Vice-President, Carl J. Weber.

Student Vice-Presidents, David H. Mills, '57, and Rose E. Stinson, '57.

Secretary-Treasurer, James Humphry, III.

Committee on Book Purchases: Richard Harrier (term expires in 1956), Walter N. Breckenridge (term expires in 1957), and (ex officio) the Vice-President and the Secretary.

Editor of the COLBY LIBRARY QUARTERLY: Carl J. Weber.

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